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FOR NEA/ARP AMACDONALD AND INR/SMOFFATT

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AL](#) [EG](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: HIGH-LEVEL VISITORS BRING MESSAGES OF SOLIDARITY,
NOT SOLUTIONS FOR SA'ADA

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen Seche for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Three high-profile regime figures - two of them Government of Egypt officials - descended on Sana'a in early October, sparking rumors that Egypt has been tasked by the Arab League with resolving the Sixth War in Sa'ada, which has dragged on for over two months. The GOE and ROYG, however, insist that Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit and Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman came only with messages of solidarity and non-interference in Yemen's internal affairs. Two days later, a visit by Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa further fueled the Sana'a rumor mill. It appears that any hoped-for Arab peace proposal for Sa'ada has yet to materialize. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On October 4, President Saleh welcomed Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit and Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman, who delivered a letter from Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. According to Embassy of Egypt Second Secretary Abdel Rahman Negmeldin, the letter professed Egypt's support for Yemen's solidarity and "rejected any foreign influence in Yemen." Negmeldin told PolOff on October 7 that Egypt is particularly concerned about Iranian infiltration, and is pressing for the ROYG to resolve the Sa'ada conflict internally. "In a weak state like Yemen, once you open the door for foreign actors, maybe you won't be able to shut the door again," he said. Aboul Gheit and Suleiman also met with Foreign Minister Abubakir al-Qirbi and National Security Bureau Director Ali Mohamed al-Ansi during their visit.

¶3. (C) Egyptian national and Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa traveled to Sana'a on October 6, sparking speculation in the Yemeni press and political circles that the Arab League and Egypt would mediate between the ROYG and the Houthi rebels with the goal of ending the months-long war. Faris al-Sagqaf, director of local think tank Center for Future Studies, told PolOff on October 5, "Amr Moussa is bringing a proposal which the President will accept in a few days. It is a good excuse to end the war." According to Negmeldin, however, Amr Moussa's only message was of solidarity with the ROYG, and a significant portion of Moussa's conversation with Saleh focused on the Palestinian issue, including the Goldstone Report and Egypt's mediation among the Palestinian factions. Official Saba news reported on October 7 that Amr Moussa had come to Yemen to talk about Palestine, Iraq and Somalia. Moussa was quoted on al-Jazeera as saying that "the unity of Yemen matters to all Arabs." The Southern Movement organized demonstrations across the southern governorates) specifically in Dhale', Aden and Abyan) to coincide with Moussa's visit; demonstrators held signs and chanted slogans asking the Arab League to address the southern cause.

COMMENT

14. (C) Yemenis, weary of two months of armed conflict in Sa'ada, and Western donors, fearful of worsening humanitarian conditions and a totally distracted ROYG, had hoped that the high-level visits in early October signaled a willingness to mediate an end to the war. It appears, however, that neither the GOE nor the Arab League are at this point willing to risk involvement in what they deem Yemen's internal affairs. With an Arab solution to the conflict appearing increasingly unlikely, there is now more pressure on the United Nations to step in forcefully. END COMMENT.
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